

## BUNDESREGIERUNG

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### German Cabinet approves recognition of Kosovo

Wed, 20.02.2008

**The Federal Government spokesperson, Ulrich Wilhelm, issues the following statement:**

The German Cabinet has today approved official recognition of the Republic of Kosovo and the establishment of diplomatic relations with the new state. Formal recognition and the declaration of willingness to enter into diplomatic relations will follow in a letter from the German President to the Kosovo President.

The parliamentary assembly in Pristina adopted a declaration of independence on 17 February 2008. In response, the EU Council for General Affairs and External Relations (GAERC) convened on 18 February 2008 and adopted a set of Council Conclusions on Kosovo. Among other things, these state that the EU Member States will decide on relations with Kosovo in accordance with national practice and international law.

In particular, the Council Conclusions take note of the assurances contained in the declaration of independence regarding protection for the Serb and other minorities, the protection of cultural and religious heritage, and international supervision.

The Council also welcomes the continued presence of the international community based on UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999). The EU had underlined that solving the problem of the status of Kosovo is a very special case and can in no way be seen as setting a precedent.

Like with many of its fellow EU Member States and others from farther afield, the German government is convinced that rapid recognition of the Republic of Kosovo by as many states as possible will serve to promote lasting stability in the region. The years of unsuccessful negotiations involving UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari and the Kosovo Trio have shown that it is impossible to reach an amicable settlement on the question of Kosovo's status.

Among the states that have already recognised Kosovo's independence are France, Great Britain, the US, Australia and Turkey. Many others, including several EU Member States, will follow suit in the next few days.

The EU had repeatedly declared its willingness (including at the EU Summit on 14 December 2007) to assume its responsibility for ensuring stability in the region. It will thus monitor developments in the newly formed state in what will be its biggest ever ESDP Mission in the broader 'rule of law' area. The Union has already adopted an appropriate resolution.

Germany will pay great attention to the Republic of Kosovo's compliance with human rights and minority protection, will closely monitor refugee returns and will expressly support closer ties between Serbia and the EU. The German government wants to sign the tentatively initialled stability and cooperation agreement with Serbia and trusts that the necessary conditions will soon be in place to allow this to go ahead.

**EU-Außenminister verabschieden gemeinsame Erklärung zum Kosovo**

